

Take time to unwind...

It's healthy to relax,
renew, and rejuvenate

April is National Stress
Awareness Month

All artwork is available to download at: www.FOH.hhs.gov/toolkit



Courtesy of FOH Center for Health Communications

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
FEDERAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

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Calendar

Monthly Events and Observances

Select a month and click for more information.

January	February	March
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December

Content will be updated as the year progresses. Check back often.

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Stress happens. Sometimes it's unavoidable, at times it's unbearable. That's why taking time for yourself is a necessity.

It may be in your head, but stress affects every cell in your body. Long-term stress can lead to a wide range of diseases - from headaches to stomach disorders to depression - and can even increase the risk of such life-threatening conditions as stroke and heart disease. Understanding the mind-stress-health connection will help you better manage stress and improve your health and well-being.

The Fight or Flight Response

The stress response, a survival mechanism that's "hard wired" into human physiology, is necessary for mobilizing quick reflexes when there is imminent danger, such as seeing or avoiding a car crash.

When you perceive a threat, stress hormones rush into your bloodstream, increasing heart rate, blood pressure, "hormonal" functions like digestion and the immune system, which is why chronic stress can leave you more vulnerable to illness.

Danger triggers the stress response but, unfortunately, so can work conflict, overwhelming deadlines, memories, anticipatory fear, or frustrated goals. Although one bad day at work won't compromise your health, weeks or months of unrelenting stress can dampen your immune response and create a risk of disease.

Cruise Control

It's not always possible to remove stress from your life. The bits won't disappear and neither will demands and timely responsibilities. This is why stress management, rather than stress elimination, is the key to successful stress reduction. The goal is to keep your nervous system from going into chronic overdrive.

When you can't remove the source of stress, try adjusting your perception to alter your response. To do this, you (change the way you view the situation. It may be challenging but it is achievable.

Combat Your Stress

If you suffer from chronic stress and can't influence or change the situation, then change your approach. Be flexible. You may have to try various options.


Remember these guidelines:

- You have the ability to choose your response to stressors.
- Recognize when you don't have control, and let it go.
- Don't get anxious about situations that you cannot change.
- Take control of your own reactions, and focus on what makes you feel calm and in control. This may take some practice, but it pays off in peace of mind.
- Develop a vision for healthy living, wellness, and personal/professional growth. Set realistic goals to help you realize your vision.

Relax and Recharge

Be sure to make time for fun and relaxation so you'll be better able to handle life's stressors. Carve at least 15 minutes out of your busy day to take care of yourself. Also, remember that exercise is an excellent stress reliever as it produces endorphins, which are brain chemicals that counteract stress.

While you can't avoid stress, you can minimize it by changing how you choose to respond to it. The ultimate reward for your efforts is a healthy, balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun.



Quick Take

Stress is something that we all experience throughout our lives. At times, stress can be beneficial, such as when a tight deadline at work requires us to stay focused and finish our tasks. Chronic stress, however, can cause a multitude of health problems, ranging from headaches and stomach disorders, to heart disease and stroke. The first step to effectively managing stress is to recognize its early warning signs.

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Stress

- Anxiety
- Back Pain
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Depression
- Fatigue
- High blood pressure
- Trouble sleeping or insomnia
- Problems with relationships
- Shortness of breath
- Stiff neck or jaw
- Upset stomach
- Weight gain or loss

Ways to Manage Stress

- Learn how to say "no," don't take on more than you can handle.
- Express your feelings.
- Manage your time.
- Stay positive.
- Accept things you can't change.
- Take time to relax and recharge.
- Adopt a healthy lifestyle - exercise regularly, eat healthy, get enough sleep, and reduce caffeine and sugar intake.

Resources

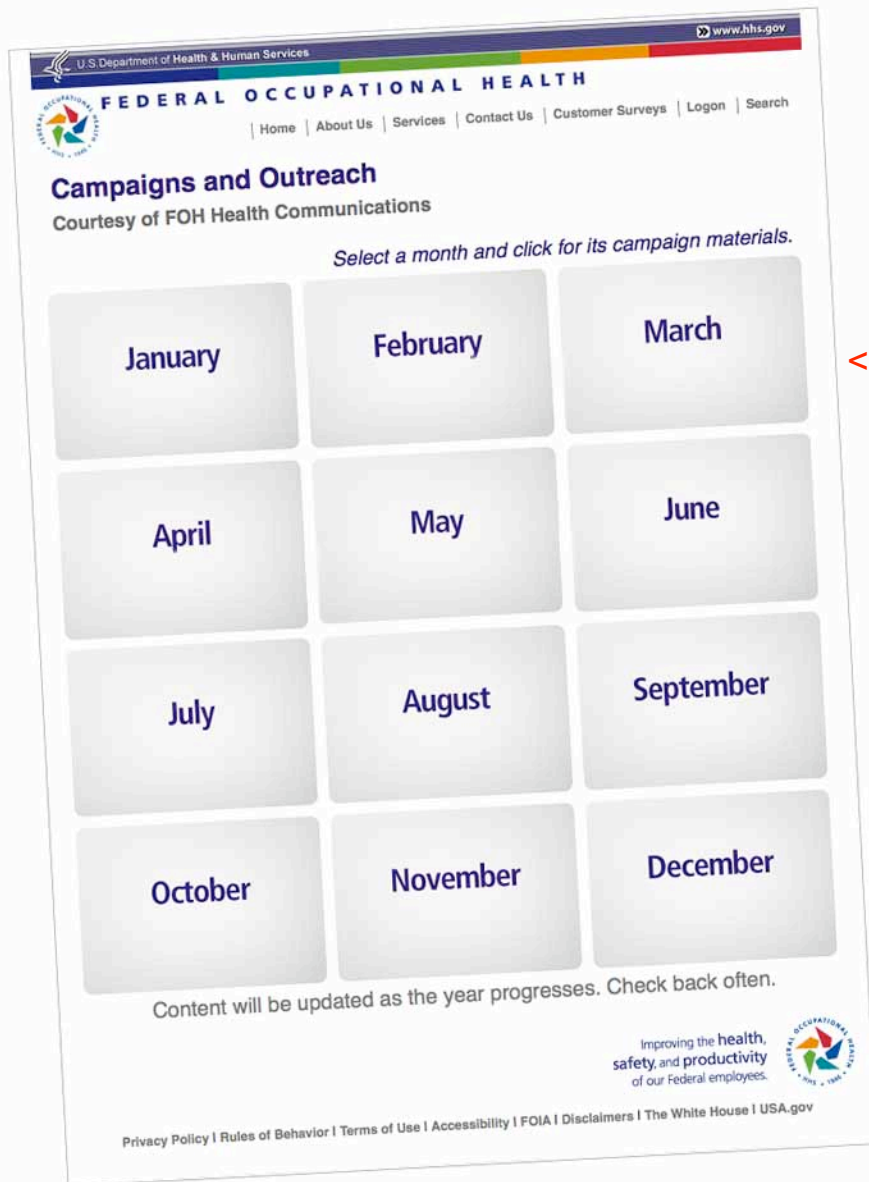
- Managing Stress: The Basics
- Interactive Tutorial on Managing Stress
- Stress, Anxiety, and Your Health
- Stress and Health (Particularly for Women)

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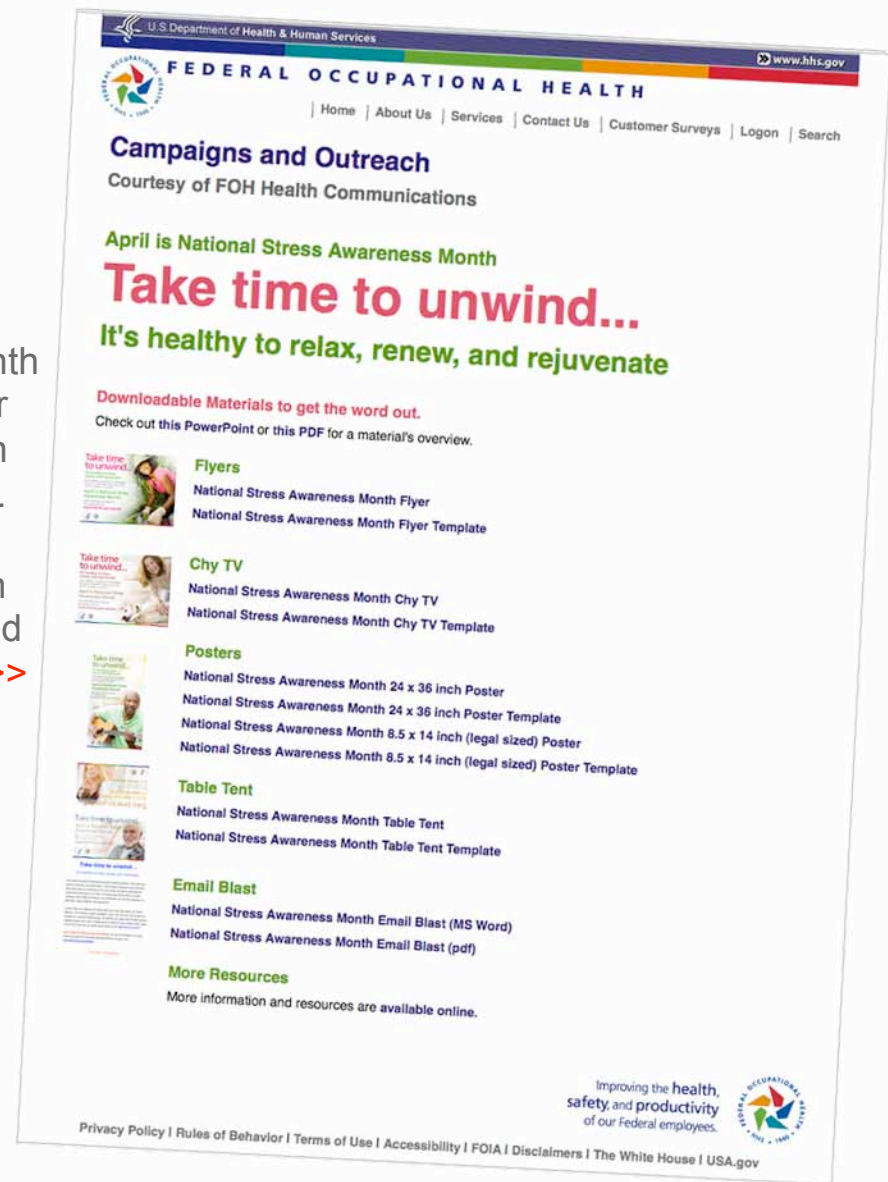
End-user information calendar webpage: www.FOH.hhs.gov/calendar

All artwork is available to download at: www.FOH.hhs.gov/toolkit



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Campaigns and Outreach

Courtesy of FOH Health Communications

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Downloadable Materials to get the word out.
Check out this PowerPoint or this PDF for a material's overview.

Flyers
National Stress Awareness Month Flyer
National Stress Awareness Month Flyer Template

Chy TV
National Stress Awareness Month Chy TV
National Stress Awareness Month Chy TV Template

Posters
National Stress Awareness Month 24 x 36 inch Poster
National Stress Awareness Month 24 x 36 inch Poster Template
National Stress Awareness Month 8.5 x 14 inch (legal sized) Poster
National Stress Awareness Month 8.5 x 14 inch (legal sized) Poster Template

Table Tent
National Stress Awareness Month Table Tent
National Stress Awareness Month Table Tent Template

Email Blast
National Stress Awareness Month Email Blast (MS Word)
National Stress Awareness Month Email Blast (pdf)

More Resources
More information and resources are available online.

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From the Toolkit webpage, click on any of the listed materials to download artwork.

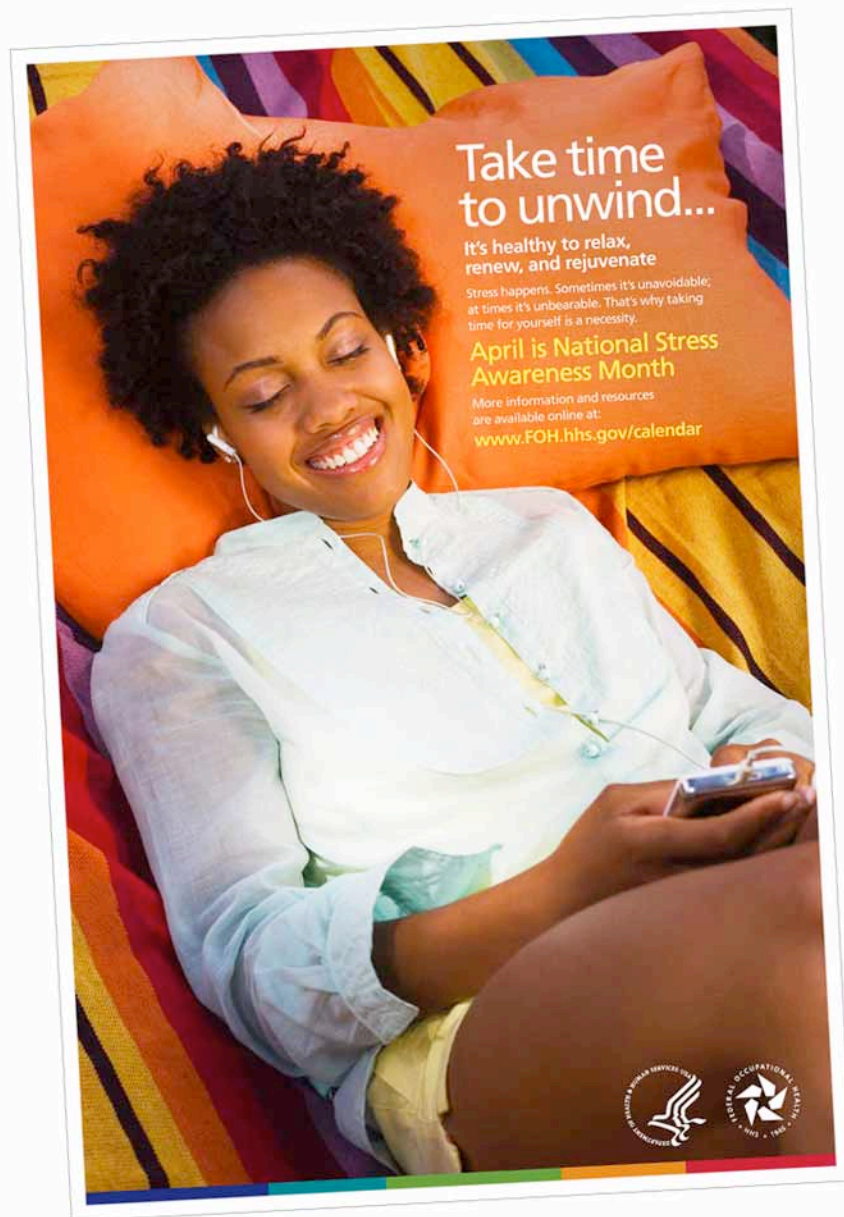
There are “as-is” versions as well as customizable template versions.

You can add your personal message to the template versions.

(Note: if you only have Adobe Acrobat Reader and do not have Adobe Acrobat Pro you will not be able to save any changes you make to the templates, you will only be able to print.)

User friendly toolkit webpage: www.FOH.hhs.gov/toolkit

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24x36 posters

(please reuse the posters you received last year; if you did not receive posters last year and would like a set, please email heidi.hua@foh.hhs.gov)

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8.5x14 bulletin board posters (legal size paper), also available as form fillable pdf templates



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8.5x11 2-sided table tents,
also available as form fillable pdf templates

11x8.5 flyers and ChyTv slides,
also available as form fillable pdf templates

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End-User Email

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Email blast, MS Word doc format (editable) and pdf versions